THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT IN LEBANON 1967-82: SURVIVAL, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

Rami Siklawi

Abstract: This article addresses the issue of the Palestinian resistance movement and its evolution and survival in the deeply divided state of Lebanon between 1967 and 1982. The Arab defeat in the 1967 war allowed the Palestinian resistance to present itself as the main resistance movement in the Arab World, and this automatically gave the Palestinians wider support in the Arab World. However, clashes between the Palestinian resistance and the right-wing Lebanese factions (who opposed the Palestinians and their military presence in Lebanon) eroded support for the Palestinian resistance, especially as the divisions and frictions spread during the Lebanese Civil War. This created seemingly endless clashes between the Palestinians and the Lebanese. These developments led to the fragmentation of the Palestinian resistance, which had always been an Israeli objective. Finally, the Israeli invasion of 1982 led to the ouster of the Palestinian Liberation Organization from Lebanon.

Keywords: Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestinian resistance movement, PLO, Israel invasion, Black September, Karama Battle, Lebanese Civil War

Introduction

The Palestinian National Movement (PNM) enjoyed wide support among the Arab masses, who regarded the Palestinian issue as central to their national struggle. The Palestinian Movement transformed the struggle between the Arab states and Israel into a guerrilla war against Israel after 1967. Moreover, the defeat of the Arab regimes in the 1967 war gave the Palestinian resistance movement immediate rise and support within the Arab world; it established a new dynamic in the struggle against Israel. Consequently, "the concept of armed struggle was itself developed with an urgency that had been lacking before June 1967."[1] It is also important to note that "… after 1967, the Palestine resistance movement had taken on the form of a nationalist uprising and not a social revolution."[2] However, the evolution of the Palestinian resistance movements was a destabilizing factor for the Arab regimes. The Palestinians found that "all Arab regimes were incapable of

Rami Siklawi is an independent scholar currently based in Beirut, Lebanon.

liberating Palestine or solving their own problems and the only force capable of carrying out the revolution was the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)."[3]

The Palestinians believed that military success would increase their popularity and this belief became a reality after the Battle of Karama in Jordan on March 21, 1968. "Karama is a small border town in the Jordan valley with Palestine. It was a political and military headquarter for al-Fateh; near the town there is the Karama Palestinian Refugee Camp, where Palestinians took Refuge after the 1967 war."[4] The Battle of Karama was a military and political turning point for the Palestinian resistance.[5] The impact was evident within two days of the battle, when thousands of people joined up with Fatah.[6] By 1970, the Palestinians (through the PLO) had become a main independent power in Jordan and a central challenge to the Jordanian monarchy. However, this did not endure long and the Jordanian front collapsed in September 1970 after the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan had come to see the Palestinian resistance as a threat to its survival. King Hussein launched a bloody war against the Palestinians and their supporters, which aimed to uproot the Palestinian resistance from Jordan. Yasir Arafat's response to the Black September events was to say, "What took place in Black September was not simply an attack by the Jordanian military regime against the revolution but an attempt of genocide against the Palestinian population as a whole."[7] In fact, Black September caused the death of more than 20,000 Palestinians, mostly civilians.[8] The PLO was fully evicted from Jordan by July 1971. The Palestinian resistance moved its headquarters to Damascus and practically to Beirut, and since 1970-71 Lebanon became the last military base and sanctuary for the Palestinian guerrillas to operate from against Israel. In Lebanon, the Palestinian military deployment after 1967 was viewed as the elimination or reduction of the Palestinian resistance movement from the wider Arab world to Lebanon and specifically to its Southern region. Consequently, the presence of the first Palestinian *fida'iyin* bases in South Lebanon began to appear in the winter of 1968-69. Since then, Palestinian military operations had been initiated against Israel, and it was noted that "between 1968 and 1970 *fedayeen* action received deep popular support in the South. Furthermore, many of the younger, more politicized Lebanese southerners joined their ranks as fighters"[9] because those (local southern Lebanese) villagers found that "supporting the Palestinian Revolution became a means of protesting against a corrupt and negligent regime."[10] Equally important, the Palestinian military presence in Lebanon was accompanied by a protest by Palestinian refugees at the unjust and unfair laws that had been applied against them and their refugee camps since their arrival to Lebanon in 1948. It was also associated with bloody battles between the Palestinians, supported by the Lebanese left-wing coalition, on the one hand, and the Lebanese army, supported by the right-wing coalition, comprised mainly of Maronite Christians, on the other.[11] This state of affairs did not end

until an agreement was reached between the Lebanese government and the PLO, culminating in the Cairo Agreement (of 1969), which changed the entire Palestinian situation and position inside Lebanon resulting in the legitimation of the Palestinian military presence in the country. The post Cairo Agreement period could be summed up by animosity between the Palestinian guerrillas and the anti-Palestinians (Lebanese right-wing groups). In short, during the first stage of the Palestinian military presence in Lebanon, the Palestinians found suitable grounds to build-up their political and military power.

Evolution of the Palestinian Resistance in Lebanon: Challenges and Opportunities

The Palestinians' political and military status in Lebanon evolved very quickly.[12] Parallel to this Palestinian ascendancy and in order to eliminate the Palestinian resistance popularity and its activities and connectivity with the local Lebanese, Israel carried out frequent aggressions against the Lebanese villages in the South. Such aggressions took place against the Lebanese villages of Houla on May 12, 1968, Mays al-Jabal on June 15, 1968, and Majihdeih on October 27, 1968.[13] Those Israeli attacks resulted in tens of thousands of Lebanese farmers leaving their villages in Southern Lebanon to safer places like Beirut.[14] Israeli aggressions continued and expanded to reach the Beirut International Airport on December 28, 1968, which within minutes, 13 civilian planes—eight of them belonging to the Lebanese National Airlines, MEA—were blown-up. Shortly thereafter, the Lebanese Prime Minister, Abdullah al-Yafi was forced to resign and Rashid Karami was asked to form the new government. The attack on the airport destabilized the Lebanese internal situation and led to a political crisis.[15] Tension soon erupted into open fighting between the Palestinian *fida'iyin* and the Lebanese Army starting in April 1969 and continued until the signing of the Cairo Agreement on November 3, 1969. The Lebanese Army (backed by the right-wing coalition) fought the Palestinian resistance constantly. One of those events took place at the village of Majdal Selim in South Lebanon on October 19-20, 1969. Three days later, the Palestinian *fida'iyin* were able to spread their full control over their refugee camps in Lebanon. These dramatic changes increased the fighting further between the Lebanese Army and the Palestinian resistance from October 25 until November 2, 1969.[16] This status quo pushed the Lebanese government to an agreement with the PLO; the Palestinian military presence was finally legitimized in Lebanon by signing the Cairo Agreement on November 3, 1969, which "redefined the regulations governing refugees in Lebanon."[17] The key points approved in the Cairo Agreement were to give the Palestinians in Lebanon the right to employment, residence, and movement; to form local committees in the camps; to

establish posts of the Palestinian Armed Struggle inside the camps; to give the Palestinians in Lebanon the right to engage in the armed struggle against Israel; to safeguard and protect the *fida'iyin* path to the *Arkub* region in the south; to cease and end the propaganda attacks between the two sides; and to release the prisoners and confiscated arms.[18] Therefore:

> The PLO recognised the government's sovereignty over Lebanon in exchange for the total right of say in the refugee camps and urban areas where the Palestinians lived. Beyond that, the government tolerated Palestinian guerrilla actions against Israel on the condition that those were co-ordinated with the Lebanese High Command. For the first time a front line state agreed formally to the use of its territory for guerrilla warfare against Israel.[19]

Israel promptly demonstrated its reaction to the Cairo Agreement by intensifying its brutal aggression against Southern Lebanon in an attempt to break the Palestinian popularity with the local people.[20] Until the Israeli invasion of 1982, the PLO, who enjoyed the Lebanese sanctuary, turned the *Fakhani* area in West Beirut into its main headquarters and

> the PLO had become more than a state-within-a-state in Lebanon, it was a state-in-exile, with an autonomy born out of the combination it enjoyed of territorial control in Lebanon, non-extractive financial resources (Arab aid), and international recognition. This was the age of the "Fakhani Republic," as the PLO headquarters area in the west Beirut neighbourhood of Fakhani was sometimes dubbed by its critics.[21]

The Palestinian movement in Lebanon found that the Cairo Agreement allowed it to continue the resistance after its defeat in Jordan. For their part, the right-wing parties sought to reduce the influence of the Palestinian resistance by attempting to terminate the Cairo Agreement.

Two important events in 1972 had a major effect in strengthening the Palestinian status in Lebanon. The first was the termination of the Deuxieme Bureau, which led to the end of the government's control of the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.[22] The second event was the official move of the PLO to Lebanon. Parallel to this Palestinian political and military ascendency, Israeli attacks continued and took a form of collective punishment against Lebanon for accepting and accommodating the Palestinian resistance. In addition to its continuous terror and aggressive missions against the Lebanese territories, Israel invaded Lebanon twice during 1972: the first invasion took place in late February 1972 when Israel occupied parts of Southern Lebanon for three days. The second invasion took place in September

1972, against the Palestinian bases in south Lebanon as well as the Palestinian refugee camp of Nahr al-Bared in Northern Lebanon killing 59 innocent civilians and wounding 40 others.[23] In return, the Palestinian resistance expanded its operations beyond the frontlines to strike within Israel, for example, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) joint operation with the Japanese Red Army at Lod airport in May 1972 was a considerable event for the Palestinian resistance. As usual, Israel continued its terrorism against the Palestinian and Lebanese civilians and launched a series of attacks and assassinations against the resistance. The Israeli Mossad assassinated the Palestinian writer and the PFLP spokesperson Ghassan Kanafani, in Beirut in early July 1972. His assassination was followed by a series of letter bombs that reached various PLO leaders such as Anis Sayigh and Bassam Abu Sharif. Despite all of that, Israel had failed to terminate the Palestinian resistance and its military presence in Southern Lebanon.

Events escalated further, and in 1973, Lebanon faced a series of major challenges in respect to internal security, as Israel exploited the struggle over Lebanese sovereignty. The Israeli incursions continued against Lebanon and took different forms. One event took place in Verdun on April 10, 1973, and led to the assassination to three Palestinian leaders: Kamal Nasser, Muhammad Youssef Najjar, and Kamal Udwan.[24] The Verdun operation raised many questions regarding the ineffectiveness and the weaknesses of the Lebanese army in providing security and protection. For instance, the Lebanese Prime Minister, Sa'ib Salam accused the Lebanese army of being incapable of protecting the Lebanese capital. Tensions deepened further between Prime Minister Salam and Lebanese President Sulayman Franjiyya; "Salam demanded the resignation of the Lebanese Army commander, a key Franjiyya ally. When Franjiyya refused to accede to this demand, Salam felt himself obliged to resign."[25] Alternatively, the friction arose again between the Lebanese authorities and the pro-Palestinians parties in Lebanon demanding the resignation of both the Lebanese government and the President, Franjiyya. The struggle over Lebanese sovereignty with the PLO was capitalized upon by Israel, which intensified its pressures. The assassination of the three Palestinian leaders initiated a major shift in Palestinian policies in Lebanon. Furthermore, the Lebanese Army assault against the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon came shortly after the Palestinian resistance had arrested three Lebanese soldiers who had frustrated the Palestinian investigations of the Verdun operation. As a result, Sulayman Franjiyya stated during the Lebanese Cabinet meeting on May 3, 1973, that the Palestinian resistance was an "occupation army."[26]

The clashes between the Army and the Palestinians sounded alarm bells, leading the Lebanese authorities and the PLO to meet at the Melkart hotel in Beirut May 15-17, 1973. The Melkart Protocol was signed between the Lebanese authorities and the Palestinian resistance on May 17, 1973. The Protocol marked a return

to the Cairo Agreement with a few amendments. Those sought to define the areas of operation of the Palestinian resistance in Lebanon; define the Palestinian *fida'iyin* training camps; and to specify the methods of supplying the Palestinian military bases as well as other minor details regarding the Palestinian military presence in Lebanon.[27] Efforts to liquidate the Palestinian resistance had failed, and the Palestinian state-within-a-state was strengthened.

Alongside this, Prime Minister Taqi al-Din al-Sulh formed the new government on July 4, 1973, which reinforced Lebanese relations with both the Palestinian *fida'iyin* and Syria.[28] A few months after the establishment of al-Sulh government, the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War broke out. The October War left the Palestinian resistance with only Lebanon, as a base. As a result, the resistance resumed its military activity against Israel from Southern Lebanon. In the wake of the (October) war, the Arab Summit of November 1973 recognized the PLO as being the only legal representative and legitimate body of the Palestinian people, and this was an additional asset in favor of the Palestinians.

The situation inside Lebanon remained unstable, and the friction between the Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese army continued at a low level in different parts of Lebanon until April 1975. However, on Sunday April 13, 1975, a major event occurred when "a bus returning from guerrilla rally at Tell al-Za'tar passed through Ayn al-Rummana on its way to the Sabra refugee camp. Phalangists ambushed the bus killing twenty-seven of its Palestinians and Lebanese passengers and wounding nineteen others."[29] The shooting on the bus incited the Palestinians and placed them as major participants in the internal Lebanese circle of violence. The Phalangists were fully prepared with all the military and technical equipment and militiamen to begin a war in Lebanon.

Concomitantly, the Syrian influence increased inside Lebanon beginning in early 1976. The Syrians had decided to intervene militarily and entered Lebanon in June 1976 in favor of the right-wing Phalangist militias and their allies. The Syrian intervention in Lebanon intensified the divisions between the various actors in Lebanon. For instance, "Musa al-Sadr came out in support of the Syrian intervention of June 1976, against the LNM—PLO joint forces."[30] Thus, Musa al-Sadr broke from his alliances with the Lebanese National Movement (LNM) and Fateh (PLO) and sided with the Syrians. The Syrian intervention in Lebanon challenged and changed the whole situation within Lebanon after 1976. Furthermore, it created more divisions within the Palestinian political organizations and led to conflict between the Palestinian guerrilla groups themselves, particularly between al-Saiqa (a pro-Syrian group) and Fateh Arafat.[31] Soon after they entered Lebanon, the Syrians began a massive war in Beirut and Mount Lebanon against the PLO and its ally, the LNM. The war of Mount Lebanon continued for six months. In line with these events, the Palestinian refugee camp of Tal al-Zat'ar fell on August

12, 1976, after 53 days of fighting between the PLO and their allies on one side and the right-wing militias on the other. Some 3,000 Palestinians and local Lebanese (mostly Shi'ites) died; and about 35,000 Palestinians and local Lebanese (mostly Shi'ites) displaced from the areas of East Beirut.[32] By the fall of Tal al-Zat'ar, "the Palestinian dimension of the Lebanese Civil War shifted to new political and military fronts."[33] The fall of Tal al-Zat'ar and the other Palestinian refugee camps located in East Beirut re-established a new game for the Palestinian movement after 1976.

The Palestinian Resistance Position between 1978 and 1982

Despite the internal Lebanese situation, the Palestinian resistance continued its operations against Israel. A major development in the Palestinian resistance activities occurred, which marked a start of a new stage in the resistance activities. A Palestinian *fidai* group of 13 members, led by Dalal Moughrabi, succeeded in breaking the Israeli barriers and launched an operation on the coast of occupied Palestine between Haifa and Tel Aviv on Saturday, March 11, 1978. The *fida'iyin*'s aim was to attack the Pan-American Hotel in Tel Aviv and take hostages to swap for Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons. As a result, 32 Israelis were reported dead and 82 wounded. Of the Palestinian group, 2 of the 13 *fidais* were missing, 9 were killed, and the other 2 *fidais* were captured and imprisoned by the Israelis. The significance of this operation was that it took place inside Palestine, far from the Lebanese-Palestinian borders. This Palestinian operation was seen as a massive shock for Israel with regard to its security. It also meant that the security zone that Israel had established was ineffective in preventing the Palestinian resistance from reaching any of the Israeli targets. As usual, it did not take Israel long to start its aggression against Lebanon. Three days later, Israel began a full-scale invasion of Lebanon with an estimated 30,000 troops. The invasion was initiated during the night of March 14–15, 1978. Israel declared that its main objective was "to sweep a zone of 30-40 kilometres and cleanse it of guerrilla bases and to build a 'Security Belt' zone for 7 to 10 kilometres."[34] A few days later, the Israeli invasion reached the Litani River, as was planned. Israel spread its control over most of the areas south of Litani, but was not able to enter the city of Tyre.[35] Soon after the 1978 invasion, Israel established a "Security Belt" in Southern Lebanon. The overall area of this belt (established between 1978 and 1982) was over 700 square kilometers with a length of up to 80 to 85 kilometers and a width of between 4 and 12 kilometers. The belt reduced the Palestinian military presence and area of operations from the Lebanese-Palestinian borders and forced the *fida'iyin* to withdraw from the occupied zone and set up new military bases northward. Yet further problems occurred between the

fida'iyin and some local (Lebanese) people. However, and with all the above-mentioned Israeli efforts during their invasion, the outcomes of the Litani Operation cannot be considered a success for Israel because the *fidai* operations continued and resumed with considerable frequency soon after.

The 1978 invasion was seen as the major driving force causing further deterioration in the relations between the Palestinian resistance and the local Lebanese villagers. In return, the Israeli invasion constituted an advantage for the Amal movement to reinforce its presence in Southern Lebanon after 1978. Consequently, many Shi'ites broke away from the Palestinian organizations to join Amal. The increasing numbers of Shi'ites who joined Amal was also verified by the notion that those Shi'ite were looking for a militia to protect them after the Palestinian organizations failed to do so. Indeed, the Israeli aggression on Shi'ite areas began to attain success by turning the local villagers against the Palestinian *fida'iyin* after 1978. "Not unexpectedly, tensions arose as pro-Amal villages barred the re-entry of PLO fighters in the wake of the withdrawal of Israeli troops."[36] The most dangerous outcomes of the 1978 Israeli invasion was the increased tension that evolved between the PLO and some local people. More specifically, Amal's relations with the PLO and the Palestinians (in general) deteriorated. Consequently, a new status quo began to surface between Amal and the various existing powers within Southern Lebanon, including the Palestinians. Moreover, the PLO in general and Yasir Arafat in particular supported Saddam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq war, and this played a major role in raising the tension between Amal and the Palestinians. From this, it is possible to argue that Southern Lebanon became an open territory for the polarization, based on regional politics and struggles.

The conflict arose between Amal and the Palestinian Fateh organization, led by Arafat when Fateh felt that it had lost its domination in Southern Lebanon. This polarization further increased the divisions between Amal and Fateh and led to a substantial rise in the armed conflict. The escalation between the Palestinians and the Amal movement started a trend for some Shi'ite fighters to break away from the Palestinian organizations and join Amal, showing their anger against the Palestinian guerrilla groups and their military presence within the local Shi'i communities. "Fateh responded with increasingly heavy military force against Amal and pro-Amal Shi'i villages in the South, a move that further exacerbated tensions. By 1981-82, clashes between the two sides were commonplace."[37] Further to that:

> Once Fateh perceived the growth of Amal movement, it tried to crack down on its bases through military force. Fierce battles were fought between Fateh and Amal between 1980 and 1982. Fateh employed brutal military force in some of these battles, indiscriminately bombarding entire villages. The village of Hanawayya, east of Tyre, was almost destroyed by Fateh bombardment.[38]

At Hanawayya in January 1982, the Palestinians used heavy artillery against the village, leading to heavy destruction and with many casualties on both sides. Goksil confirms the matter by stating:

> At Hanawayya, the Palestinians had a base there and they had a clash with Amal and several Palestinians were killed in that clash and thus it spread, and became a very serious problem. It was the Democratic Front (DFLP) and Amal; Fateh tried to stay out of this battle, saying they were neutral, but nobody believed that. So we had to separate the two sides by UNIFIL soldiers, otherwise it would have become a very serious problem between the two sides.[39]

As mentioned earlier, the tension between Amal (and its local supporters) and the Palestinian organizations turned more serious after the 1978 invasion. The villagers of South Lebanon witnessed a series of endless battles between Amal and Fateh, moving from one village to another, through 1979, 1980, and 1981. Nevertheless, the most dangerous battles fought prior to June 1982 between Amal and the Palestinians were seen as an opportunity to create a suitable climate for the (already planned) Israeli invasion of 1982. Amal and the Palestinians agreed to find a solution and to end the clashes. Both agreed to form joint committees after they assessed the damage. Yet despite the efforts through the joint committees, fighting broke out once again in early 1982. The most dangerous clashes occurred between January and February of 1982 when Amal clashed with the Palestinians and their allies, the Lebanese leftists. It was clear that these fights got out of control and were hard to contain, which made it even harder to restore the relations between the two sides.

While Amal and the PLO were both distracted in minor conflicts within Southern Lebanon, Israel took advantage of the situation and invaded Lebanon in 1982. The invasion, dubbed the "Peace for Galilee," was already planned when Shimon Peres was Minister of Defence between 1974 and 1977. The final structure of the plan, however, was set approximately seven to eight months before the invasion.[40] However, the final configuration was put on track during Ariel Sharon's secret visit to Jounieh in February 1982. The meeting took place at the house of Bashir Gemayel, a key figure in the *Kata'ib* (Phalangist) militia;

> Its information suggested that the Israeli invasion plan was discussed, and that a link-up envisaged between IDF units advancing north along the coast and Maronite forces circling round Beirut to meet at Damur, fifteen kilometers to the south of the capital.[41]

The proposed limits of the Israeli invasion set to 40 kilometers were amended to include a full-scale invasion up to Beirut. Soon after that meeting, the Israeli

military deployed heavily at the Lebanese Southern borders, clearly indicating that the invasion was only a matter of time. On June3, 1982, a gunman affiliated to the Abu-Nidal (Sabri al-Banna) group, which was not part of the PLO, attempted to assassinate the Israeli ambassador to the United Kingdom. The PLO expressed disapproval and non-liability for that attack. In fact, Abu-Nidal group was a nemesis of both Arafat and the PLO. Be that as it may, Israel used the assassination attempt to justify its (already planned) invasion of Lebanon to gain unlimited support from the international community for the invasion. Israeli air raids against Southern Lebanon and Beirut escalated from previous levels during the first two days of the invasion and led to a massive number of civilian casualties: 190 dead and 450 wounded.[42] It was clear that Israel's main objective during the 1982 invasion was not only to destroy the Palestinian military presence but also to target directly the leadership of the PNM and the soul of the resistance. It was also an attempt to establish the base of a new world order through the elimination of the resistance movement in the Arab World and the termination of the Palestinian right of return.

The Decline of the Palestinian Military Role in Lebanon

The resistance held firm during the 1982 invasion and fought the Israeli invaders fearlessly. It launched a series of operations in multiple locations. The major battles took place in the Barbir-Mathaf district and at the Khalda area.[43] Furthermore, Israel enhanced its presence in East Beirut where the power of its allies, the right-wing militias was located. Simultaneously, Israel besieged West Beirut, which lasted for seven weeks. That siege was one of the hardest, as the Israelis prevented humanitarian aid to reach the inhabitants of West Beirut. For example, the Red Cross aid and medical and food supplies were restricted from reaching West Beirut where the food, fuel, water, medications, and other necessities had been depleted. A humanitarian crisis was in full swing. The lack of fuel supplies also created a problem because hospitals could not provide full services, leading to an increase in the number of civilian casualties. Moreover, the inadequacy of electricity and water supplies, and the lack of garbage collection from the streets during that hot summer, led to viruses spreading among the inhabitants. Simply, the siege turned West Beirut into a prison for the resistance and its people. It is essential to note that the siege of West Beirut was accompanied with heavy bombardment of civilian districts, which led to the death of thousands of innocent civilians. On August 1, 1982, for instance, and after 15 hours of massive land, sea, and air bombardment, Israel occupied the Beirut International Airport. On that day alone, an estimated 100,000 projectiles landed on West Beirut, killing 165 and wounding 400 innocent civilians.[44]

While the siege of West Beirut had taken place, the weak Lebanese cabinet met and agreed on evacuating the Palestinian fighters from Lebanon, through the implementation of what had been known as the Habib Plan. The Plan went into effect in the last week of August 1982, when "8,300 Palestinian fighters and 3,600 Palestinian Liberation Army (PLA) and Syrian troops left Lebanon."[45] The evacuation of the Palestinian *fida'iyin* was accompanied with the deployment of the multinational forces in Lebanon and "on August 25 some 800 American Marines arrived in Lebanon to constitute with French and Italian contingents a multinational forces (MNF) to supervise PLO withdrawal and to ensure the protection of the Palestinians remaining in Lebanon."[46] In fact, the arrival of the multinational forces was regarded as a method to fully internationalize the Lebanese situation. Just two days after the PLO evacuation, Bashir Gemayel, the head of the Lebanese Forces and the pro-Israeli dominant figure, was elected President of Lebanon under the protection of both the Israeli tanks and the multinational forces. However, on September14, 1982, President-elect Gemayel was killed with 18 of his *Kata'ib* colleagues in a massive explosion that destroyed the *Kata'ib* headquarters. A few days later, the Sabra and Shatilla massacre took place at the Palestinian refugee camps in West Beirut, where Phalangist elements massacred over one thousand Palestinians and poor Lebanese (mainly Shi'ites) with direct help and assistance from Israel.

The evacuation of the PLO in August 1982 did not end the Palestinian military presence in Lebanon, but reduced it. Moreover, the expulsion of the PLO from West Beirut left the Palestinian refugees who were living in West Beirut, the North and the Beqa under direct Syrian control. However, the appearance of Arafat and his fighters once again in the northern city of Tripoli in September 1983 produced another cycle of violence between his supporters, on the one hand, and the Syrians and their Palestinian allies, on the other. Since then, frequent clashes erupted until the Syrians defeated Arafat who left northern Lebanon by sea in November 1983. The battle of Tripoli created massive destruction in that region. Sayigh notes that "the main evacuation took place on 20 December 1983, as 4,700 persons—including the PLA defectors and 250 women and children—sailed out under UN flags towards PLO camps in Algeria, Sudan and the two Yemens."[47] This second eviction of Arafat and his followers from Lebanon was more catastrophic because it led to the split of Fateh. Simply, Arafat had failed to return and re-establish his power in Lebanon, but the people who were faithful to Fateh, continued to be loyal to Arafat. It is possible to argue that the PLO's "second evacuation" from Lebanon marked the termination of its military presence in Lebanon. For Arafat, arguably, his failure brought to an end the PLO's (Fateh) policy-making in Lebanon. Hence, the Palestinians faced a new dilemma of polarizations. Rows of divisions arose inside the Palestinian political body and more disputes had since emerged. The

loss of the Palestinian base in Lebanon was catastrophic to the PLO as it lost access to the last remaining geographic area adjacent to Palestine. The PLO had to relocate far away from its last frontier, which created a major obstacle in reshaping the political and military structure and power since. However, the eviction of the PLO from Lebanon gave a significant boost to the Lebanese resistance, which benefited from Palestinian military experience and prepared itself for a new stage of performance after 1982.

Conclusion

The Palestinian military's decline in the Lebanese arena following 1982 was catastrophic with respect to the PLO's structure and institutions in Lebanon. The PLO had undergone a severe setback through its evacuation from Lebanon, which also had a catastrophic effect on its military position. It lost the legitimate right to remain in Lebanon as an armed movement to fight Israel. The divisions within the PLO were of benefit to external powers in particular, enabling Syria to gain more hegemony over Palestinian political structures. It steadily weakened Palestinian political representation, creating yet further internal divisions in the PLO. After the 1982 Israeli invasion, disputes arose and dug deep within the PLO, predominantly between Arafat and the Syrian-backed groups. This eventuality led automatically to the split of Fateh into two groups in 1983. Parallel to this Palestinian military decline and fragmentation in Lebanon, there was a substantial rise of the local Lebanese resistance against the Israeli occupation, and this had a significant impact in the post-1982 period on both the Palestinian resistance and the wider Palestinian refugees in the diaspora who were given once again the glory and a glance of hope for a fully liberated Palestine.

Notes

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5. Frangi, *The PLO and Palestine*, 111.
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8. Odeh, *Lebanon: Dynamics of Conflict*, 10.
9. Rosemary Sayigh, *Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries* (London: Zed Books, 1979), 156.
10. Sayigh, *Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries*, 157.
11. The right-wing parties formed an alliance called *al-Hilf. Al-Hilf* was formed from the extremist Maronite Lebanese *zuama* (i.e., Camille Chamoun and his Party of Free Nationalists (PFN), Emile Edde and his National Bloc (NB), and Pierre Gemayel with his Lebanese *Kataib* Party (LKP)).
12. The major deployment area for the Palestinians in Lebanon had been at al-Arkub region Arkub region consists of Hasbaya (which is the capital of the district) Shib'a, Kawkaba, Rashaya al-Wadi, and other villages. The population of al-Arkub region counts about 200,000 inhabitants during that time (in the 1970s). See Farid al-Khateib, "Al-Hawadith fi al-Janoub: Min Fatehland Ila … al-Ayshiya. Barkiyat Abu Ammar Ila Abu Jihad: Israeil Sa-Tahtal al-Janoub … Ista'ido," *al-Hawadith Journal*, Issue 1184, July 13, 1979.
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20. Kail C. Ellis, "Lebanon: The Struggle of a Small Country in a Regional Context," Special Issue: The Second Republic of Lebanon, *Arab Studies Quarterly* 21:1 (Winter 1999), 9.
21. Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 448.
22. After the 1958 crisis in Lebanon, General Fouad Chehab succeeded Camil Chamoun for the Lebanese presidency. This period was known as the Deuxieme Bureau period which started in 1959 with the establishment of *al-maktab al-tani* or *al-mukhabarat*, and terminated by signing of the Cairo Agreement in 1969. During this time (1959-69), the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon went under full and direct control of the Lebanese authorities, and it was marked by a set of unjust procedures. These unfair procedures affected all the Palestinian refugees and can be summarized as follows: the Palestinian refugees were prohibited from going from one refugee camp to another before obtaining a special permission from the army (Deuxieme Bureau) and to declare the purpose of their visit; the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon were prohibited from listening to revolutionary radio stations like *Sawt al-Arab* (Voice of the Arabs) or *Iza'at al-Thawra* or *Sawt al-Asifa*; the Palestinians were prohibited from buying newspapers and discuss politics; the Palestinians were prohibited from using cement inside their refugee camps.

23. Mahmoud Soueid, *Al-Janub al-Lubnani fi Muwajahat Israil: 50 Aman Min al-Sumud wa al-Muqawamah* [South Lebanon Confronting Israel: 50 Years of Steadfastness and Resistance] (Lebanon: Institute for Palestine Studies, Beirut, 1998), 8.
24. Kamal Nasser was the official spokesman of the PLO; Muhammad Youssef Najjar was a PLO executive committee member and the head of the Higher Political Committee for Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon; Kamal Udwan was an Executive Committee member and the head of the Unified Information Council.
25. Helena Cobban. *The Making of Modern Lebanon* (London: Hutchinson, 1985), 112.
26. Sulafa Heijawi, *Al-Falistinioun fi Lubnan. The Palestinians in Lebanon* (Majalat Markaz al-Dirasat al-Filistiniya, Baghdad University, Issue No 22, May-June 1977), 57-58.
27. Sobhi Munzir Yaghi, "Al-Wojoud al-Filistini al-Musalah fi Lubnan Munzo Nihayat al-Sitinat ila al-Yaowm," *al-Nahar* newspaper, June 16, 2007.
28. Kamal S. Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War Lebanon 1958–1976* (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1976), 70-72.
29. Rex Brynen, *Sanctuary and Survival: The PLO in Lebanon* (Boulder and San Francisco: Westview Press, 1990), 80.
30. Joe Stork, *The War of the Camps, the War of the Hostages*, MERIP Reports, No. 133. (June 1985), 3-7.
31. Farid El Khazen, "Ending Conflict in Wartime Lebanon: Reform, Sovereignty and Power, 1976–1988," *Middle Eastern Studies* 40:1 (January 2004): 65-84; Published by Frank Cass, London, 67.
32. Brynen, *Sanctuary and Survival: The PLO in Lebanon*, 101-103. It is important to note that the numbers vary from one source to another. Rex Brynen spoke about 20,000 Palestinians and 15,000 Lebanese, which makes the total population of Tal al-Zat'ar to 35,000. Whereas Tabitha Petran estimated the number of Tal al-Zat'ar by 30,000. Also in terms of the Blockade of Tal al-Zat'ar Tabitha Petran notes that the siege of Tal al-Zat'ar went for 119 days till it fell on August 12, 1976. For further information, see Tabitha Petran, *The Struggle over Lebanon* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987), 206-207. Yezid Sayigh counts 21,000 inhabited Palestinians and 10,000 Lebanese. See Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949–1993* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 396.
33. Brynen, *Sanctuary and Survival: The PLO in Lebanon*, 103.
34. Ferdinand Smit, *The Battle for South Lebanon: The Radicalisation of Lebanon's Shi'ites 1982-1985* (Amsterdam: Bulaaq, 2000), 114.
35. Munzer Jaber, *Al-Sharit al-Lubnani al-Muhtall: Masalik al-Ihtilal, Masarat al-Muwajaha, Masa'ir al-Ahali* [The Occupied Lebanese Border Strip: The Paths of the Occupations, the Lines of Confrontation, the Fate of the Population] (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1999), 233.
36. Jamal Sankari, *Fadlallah: The Making of a Radical Shi'ite Leader* (London: Saqi Publications, 2005), 168.
37. Rex Brynen, "PLO Policy in Lebanon: Legacies and Lessons," *Journal for Palestine Studies* 18:2 (Winter 1989), 48-70, 57.
38. As'ad Abu-Khalil, "Druze, Sunni and Shiite Political Leadership in Present-Day Lebanon," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 7:4 (Fall 1985), 47.
39. Timor Goksil, Interview by the author in English at AUB. Beirut, Thursday, January 4, 2007.
40. Mahmoud Soueid, ed., *The Israeli War in Lebanon (June–December, 1982): A Selection of Reports, Documents and Articles from the Hebrew Press*. Compiled by Hebrew Section (Beirut, Lebanon: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1985), 7.
41. Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 514.

42. Smit, *The Battle for South Lebanon*, 141.
43. Hassan Sab'ih, "Al-Ijtiyah al-Israeli Lil Asima: Zikra Mushtaraka? Bilkad Zikra? Wa-Low Adna Fikra. Beirut Tahtarik … Toukawim wa La Tarfa'a al-Aalam al-Baydah," *al-Safir* newspaper, September 14, 2002.
44. Smit, *The Battle for South Lebanon*, 156.
45. Tabitha Petran, *The Struggle over Lebanon* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987), 282.
46. Petran, *The Struggle over Lebanon*, 282.
47. Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 573.